

ST. CLAIR COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

March 11, 2026

Members Present:

Ken Sharkey, Chairman
Scott Greenwald, Assistant Chairman
Robert Allen
Marty Crawford
Matt Smallheer
Robert Trentman
Rick Vernier

Members Excused:

Staff Present:

Rick Stubblefield, Executive Director
Becky Rose, Executive Assistant

Others Present:

Kimberly Huth, Military Affairs Director
Darren James, MidAmerica Airport Director
May Brown

Call to Order:

Chairman Ken Sharkey called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment Regarding the Agenda:

Chairman Sharkey asked if anyone present had a question or comment regarding the agenda. There were none.

Approval of February 11, 2026, Committee Minutes (action required):

Chairman Sharkey called for action on the February 11, 2026, Committee minutes. Mr. Greenwald made the motion to approve the minutes which were seconded by Mr. Vernier. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business (Director's Report):

Mr. Stubblefield stated that he met with a representative from Norfolk Southern Railway to discuss potential support for regional rail projects. It appears the company may be evaluating a possible merger and is seeking to gauge local support for such an initiative. The St. Clair County area continues to experience significant rail traffic between Dupou and the Terminal Railroad Association (TRRA) yard. We will continue coordinating with TRRA to explore potential project opportunities.

Projects related to the 2022 flood relief efforts are beginning to move forward, with five communities collectively receiving \$28 million in Disaster Recovery funding.

An Opportunity Zone meeting is scheduled for Friday with Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), with a focus on revitalizing designated zones and developing strategies to attract investment. The effort aims to offer targeted incentives to encourage individuals and businesses to locate in distressed areas.

Additionally, follow-up activities are underway related to the site selector visit discussed last month.

There were no further comments or questions.

Mr. Crawford made a motion to approve the Director's report and Mr. Smallheer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business (MidAmerica Airport Director's Report):

Mr. Darren James reported that February was busiest month in the airport's history, with just under 20,000 passengers. This represents an 8% increase compared to last February and a 12% increase year over year. March, which coincides with spring break travel, is expected to bring continued high activity, including full parking capacity.

A conference is scheduled for the end of the month involving airports that partner with Allegiant Air. The conference will focus on identifying potential opportunities the airline may pursue, as well as sharing relevant updates and information.

Congressional earmark requests were due yesterday to Senator Mike Bost. Three projects were submitted for the airport: a walkway connecting the MetroLink terminal to the airport terminal, improvements to Airport Boulevard, and upgrades to the air service road around the runway. These same requests will also be submitted to Senator Tammy Duckworth and Senator Dick Durbin with their appropriations processes open.

Mr. Sharkey asked if the Airport has been successful with earmarks in previous years. Mr. James responded that the Airport has been fortunate over the past several years across delegation.

Mr. Vernier asked about the purposed merger of the Allegiant and Sun Country. Mr. James responded that the expectation is that it will not be approved until at least the second half of the year.

There were no further comments or questions.

Mr. Allen made a motion to approve the Director's report and Mr. Vernier seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business (Military Affairs Director Comments):

Ms. Kimberly Huth reported that the base has submitted a request for approximately \$7 million in funding to address flooding concerns. Depending on whether Senator Budzinski or Senator Bost approve all, part, or none of the requested amount, the proposal may be scaled into smaller, phased projects to align with the level of funding received.

There were no further comments or questions.

Mr. Greenwald made a motion to approve the Director's report and Mr. Crawford seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Comments:

There were no further comments or questions.

Adjournment:

Chairman Sharkey asked for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Vernier so moved, and it was seconded by Mr. Allen. The motion to adjourn passed unanimously and the Committee adjourned at 5:18 p.m.